

**James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, June 10, 1798.  
Transcription: The Writings of James Madison,  
ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,  
1900-1910.**

**TO THOMAS JEFFERSON. MAD. MSS.**

June 10, 1798

Dear Sir, —I have duly received your favor of the 31 Ult: & am glad to find mine are recd as regularly as yours. The law for capturing French privateers may certainly be deemed a formal commencement of hostilities, and renders all hope of peace vain, unless a progress in amicable arrangements at Paris not to be expected, should have secured it agst the designs of our Govermt. If the Bill suspending commerce with the French Dominions passes, as it doubtless will, the French Government will be confirmed in their suspicion begotten by the British Treaty, of our coalition in the project of starving their people, and the effect of the measure will be to feed the English at the expence of the farmers of this Country. Already flour is down, I hear, at 4 dollars a barrel. How far the views of the Govt. will be answd by annihilating the ability to pay a land tax at the very moment of imposing it, will be best explained by the experimt.. Looking beyond the present moment it may be questioned whether the interest of G. B. will be as much advanced by the sacrifice of our trade with her enemies as may be intended. The use of her manufactures here depends on our means of payment, & then on the sale of our produce to the markets of her enemies. There is too much passion, it seems in our Councils to calculate consequences of any sort. The only hope is that its violence by defeating itself may save the Country. The answers of Mr. Adams to his addressers form the most grotesque scene in the tragicomedy acting by the Govermt. They present not only the grossest contradictions to

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the maxims measures & language of his predecessor and the real principles & interests of his Constituents, but to himself. He is verifying compleatly the last feature in the character drawn of him by Dr. F., however his title may stand to the two first, "Always an honest man, often a wise one, but sometimes wholly out of his senses." I thank you for the offspring of the Senatorial Muse, which shall be taken care of. It is truly an unique. It is not even prose run mad.<sup>1</sup> Monroe is much at a loss what course to take in consequence of the wicked assault on him by Mr. A. and I am as much so as to the advice that ought to be given him. It deserves consideration perhaps that if the least occasion be furnished for reviving Governmental attention to him, the spirit of party revenge may be wreaked thro' the forms of the Constitution. A majority in the H. of R. & # of the Senate seem to be ripe for everything. A temperate & dignified animadversion on the proceeding, published with his name, as an appeal to the candor & justice of his fellow Citizens agst the wanton & unmanly treatment, might perhaps be of use. But it wd be difficult to execute it in a manner to do justice to himself, & inflict it on his adversary, without clashing with the temper of the moment. Hoping for the pleasure of congratulating you soon, on your release from your painful situation, I close with the most affectionate assurance that I am yours<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "I enclose for your perusal a poem on the alien bill, written by Mr. Marshall."—Jefferson to Madison, May 31, 1798, *Writings* (Ford), vii., 262.

<sup>2</sup> Congress adjourned July 16 to December 1. The alien bill was passed July 6, the sedition July 14, the naturalization bill was approved June 18. Jefferson went back to Monticello immediately after the adjournment, and he and Madison had few occasions for writing to each other during that summer.